

Da Nang Rebels Fell U.S. Plane

Marines on Alert For Civil Strife

SAIGON (AP) — Rebels shot down a U.S. spotter plane over Da Nang late today. U.S. Marines quietly took over a Da Nang River bridge disputed between rebel and government troops in that hotbed of northern dissidence.

Premier Nguyen Cao Ky's opponents poured 500 more

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antigovernment infantrymen into the city. And 200 men from a detachment of rangers already based there switched to the rebel side. That boosted the rebel ranks to more than 1,000 men, against the 2,500 marines and paratroopers Ky sent in Sunday.

Threaten Fire Deaths

Government forces, supported by two tanks, started to close in on one of Da Nang's three rebel-held pagodas. But they withdrew after Buddhist monks set fire to a wooden pyre they had erected there and threatened to burn themselves to death if the advance continued.

Seven fire suicides were factors in the Buddhist campaign of 1963 that led to the destruction of President Ngo Dinh Diem and his government.

Ky had visited Da Nang briefly to rally support and swear in his new military commander for the five northern provinces making up the agitation-ridden 1st Corps area.

U.S. Marines won control of the Da Nang River bridge by negotiations. Their commander, Gen. Lewis W. Walt, talked Vietnamese Marines into letting the Americans take over the west end and others negotiated a withdrawal of rebel troops holding the east end.

The American spotter plane, carrying a U.S. Army pilot and a Marine Corps observer, drew rebel fire on two flights over Da Nang.

Smoking, it crash-landed on a beach two miles east of town after taking seven hits from antigovernment gunners based near one of the three pagodas controlled by the rebels. Neither American was injured.

They were identified as 1st Lt. Donald Johnson of Tacoma, Wash., the Army pilot, and 1st Lt. Timothy McThingne, the Marine observer.

The rebel soldiers aimed automatic weapons and rifle fire on each of the plane's two low passes over the city. There

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